**Drop-out rate among students**

261. PROF. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the drop out rate among students are still very high;

(b) if so, the latest figures of drop-out rates in the elementary stage for boys and girls with rural and urban break-up; and

(c) the details of efforts being made to solve this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b) The drop-out rate, though high in case of students in Classes I—V and I—VIII, continue to decline over the years. The available data in this regard is not segregated on rural-urban basis. According to the available information, drop-out rates in Classes I—V and I—VIII in 1994-95 are as following:—

| | Class I—V | Class I—VIII |
|---|---|---|
| Girls | 37.8 | 56.5 |
| Boys | 35.9 | 50.0 |
| Total | 36.3 | 52.7 |

(c) The measures taken by the Central Government and State Governments to solve this problem include micro-planning and community mobilisation; greater involvement of Panchyat Raj Institutions; setting up of Village Education Committees; improvement of school environment and infrastructure through Operation blackboard scheme; incentives for girls and SC/ST students such as free textbooks, uniforms and attendance scholarships; establishing and strengthening of institutions of teacher education; introduction of Minimum Levels of Learning and implementation of Mid-day Meals Programme.

**Interest on agricultural loans**

262. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from some sections of agriculturists demanding lower rates of interest for agricultural loans; and

(b) if so, the reaction of his Ministry to such a demand and the steps proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Various suggestions have been received for lowering the rates of interest on agricultural credit to small and marginal farmers. These suggestions are being examined in consultation with the Ministry of Finance.

**Steps to deal with traffic congestions in Metropolitan Cities**

263. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of growing traffic problem in the metropolitan cities in the country;

(b) whether the Ring Railway Scheme of Delhi is proposed to be revised and tackle the growing traffic problem; and

(c) the other steps taken to solve the increasing traffic problems of other metropolitan cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In order to decongest traffic from Shahdara in the East and Tughlakabad in the South, Ring Railway was started in 1970 and completed before Asiad. These lines were originally planned as Goods avoiding lines and they were not planned to carry commuters. During Asiad the passenger services were run to enable people from outside Delhi to travel on

the Ring Railway. Presently the number of Goods train running on these lines is so high, that the line capacity is more than fully utilised and there is no scope for running additional passenger trains on this route.

In the meeting of NCR/PB held on 24.9.96, it was decided that the feasibility study for laying two additional tracks alongwith Ring Railway in Delhi shall be conducted by Government of National Capital Region Delhi in Co-ordination with National Capital Region Planning Board.

(c) (i) From 1986, with the amendments in the Allocation of buisness Rules, the subject Urban Transportation is under the charge of Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment, which is the nodal Ministry for planning and co-ordination of the development of Urban Transport System, including rail based ones. The Railways will be prepared to render technical assistance in the planning and construction of the systems.

(ii) In pursuance to above, Delhi MRTS project, falling under the purview of Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment, has been sanctioned by the Govt. of India.

(iii) However, wherever the segregation of suburban traffic is not possible from main line traffic, railways continue to develop the commuter traffic and the following new projects have been sanctioned during 1995-96 and 1996-97:—

(1) Borivli-Virar quadrupling
(2) Santacruz-Borivli 5th line
(3) Kurla-Thane phase-I (5th and 6th line)
(4) Thane-Turbhe-Nerul/Vashi
(5) Belapur-Panvel double line
(6) Seawood-Uran double line
(7) Luz-Vellachery

The cost of above projects, except (1), (2) and (3), is being shared between State Govt. and Railway in the ratio of 2 : 1. The entire cost of the land is borne by State Government.

(iv) In order to give relief to commuters of Metro cities the following projects have been commissioned in the last two years:—

(1) Addl. pair of lines between Bandra and Andheri,
(2) Calcutta Metro,
(3) Madras Beach-Chepauk (Chepauk-Luz likely to be completed during 1996-97).

**हिसार से चण्डीगढ़ के लिये सीधी रेल गाड़ी**

264. **श्री रामजीलाल:** क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार को इस बात की जानकारी है कि हिसार से राज्य की राजधानी—चण्डीगढ़ के लिए कोई सीधी रेल गाड़ी नहीं है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उक्त मार्ग पर कब तक सीधी रेल गाड़ी शुरू कर दी जायेगी; और

(ग) इसमें विलम्ब के क्या कारण है?

**रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सतपाल महाराज):** (क) जी हां।

(ख) फिलहाल हिसार और चण्डीगढ़ के बीच सीधी गाड़ी चलाने का कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं है;

(ग) परिचालनिक कठिनाइयां और संसाधनों की तंगी।

**Creation of new Railway Zones**

265. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new railway zones already created during the current year and how many more zones are proposed to be created during the next one year;

(b) whether Government have worked out the estimated expenditure, recurring and non-recurring, which the railways will have to bear by creation of these new zones;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of new posts in each category viz. 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' that will be created in the wake of new zones; and

(e) the reaction of Railway workers' unions on opening of new railway zones?